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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Status of Polish Jews: Repercussions of Soviet Anti-Semitic Developments/Jewish Community in Warsaw/Possible Number of Orthodox Polish Jews/Future Emigration to Israel.

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SUPP. TO
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Repercussions of Soviet Anti-Semitic Developments

1.

the disclosures of the Slansky Trial in Prague and the anti-Semitic measures taken by the Soviet Government in winter 1952-53 had little noticeable effect in Poland.

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2.

considerable number of Jews were dismissed from jobs in the local textile industry. However, they were mainly persons who had previously applied for permission to emigrate to Israel and had either been rejected or had given up such intentions. A number of Jewish engineers also lost their jobs because, it was officially stated, they had completed their studies at universities in Western Europe. The rank and file of the Jewish community in Lodz were not persecuted in any way.

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3.

the UB in that town searched the homes of Jewish Party members soon after the first Soviet anti-Israeli statements. They were looking for evidence of contacts with Jews in Western countries. Just at this time, the Swidnica Artisans' Cooperative had to dismiss some of its personnel due to the acute shortage of raw materials. Jews who were registered for emigration to Israel were the first to be discharged.

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4.

"Such reports do not mean that the Jewish population in Poland is entirely calm and undisturbed. There was considerable panic in the Jewish communities after the Moscow announcements, particularly prior to Stalin's death. It was feared that still stronger anti-Semitic measures would be forthcoming.

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"The brighter side of the picture was the rather friendly attitude of the Poles towards the Jews during the recent events. Many Poles, particularly the intelligentsia, felt increasing resentment towards the Jews after World War II. They objected to the number of Jewish intellectuals and politicians in the Communist Government and within the CP. But the anti-Semitic moves of the Communists have changed their attitude. Many Poles have told their Jewish neighbors: 'Now we can stand together again in our fight, as we did during the German occupation.'

"Perhaps the same reasons have also changed the attitude of the Polish customs officials towards emigrating Jews. Previous groups arriving in Haifa have complained of harsh and rigid treatment when they passed the Polish customs. The present group, which left Poland in late February 1953, unanimously have declared that the Polish officials were courteous, some of them even friendly.

Jewish Community in Warsaw

7.

according to latest statistics around 10,000 Jews are now living in the Polish capital. Most of them do not, however, admit their Jewish origin and are employed in various departments of the city and state administration. The Jewish community in Warsaw is under the supervision of the Office for Religious Affairs of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, which finances the Community's activities. The money originates from the blocked account of the 'Joint' organization in Poland, which amounted originally to some one million Zlotys. This account was frozen and taken over by the Communist Government. The Community presents its applications for funds to a special Arbitration Commission. Its representative on this Commission is (fnu) Bankier, its chairman. The delegate of the CP-controlled Jewish Cultural Association is (fnu) Fiszgrund. If the Commission approves a fund-application, the Office for Religious Affairs pays the money to the Community.

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Possible Number of Orthodox Jews in Poland

8.

"A very difficult problem for Orthodox Jews before the abolition of food rationing was the procurement of the traditional Matzoth for the Jewish Holidays. This problem exists no longer; previously special Matzoth coupons were issued to Jews throughout the country. The distribution of these coupons gives an indirect indication of the number of Orthodox Jews in Poland. It must be remembered, however, that the number indicated in the application for coupons was slightly exaggerated in order to obtain higher rations. Following were the quotas for the major Polish towns:

Lodz	10,000	
Wroclaw	10,000	
Cracow	3,000	
Bydgoszcz	3,000	
Katowice	1,600	
Bialystok	500	
Dziarskiew District,		
with the towns		
Walbrzych and		
Legnica	5,000	Total: 30,100 [Bis]

At the last Jewish Holidays during rationing a total of 50,000 Matzoth coupons were distributed. The difference between 30,000 and 50,000, i.e. 20,000, indicates that some 20,000 Jews are living scattered in small communities throughout Poland.

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Future Emigration to Israel

9. "The emigration from Poland to Israel is still going on. At the time when the present group left Poland [late February 1953], an additional group of 100 Jews had all necessary emigration documents ready and were preparing for their departure.
10. "The Ministry of State Security holds about 15,000 applications for emigration. most of them submitted as far back as 1950. Since the Prague trial and subsequent anti-Semitic developments, applicants have no longer dared to inquire about their applications at the Ministry in person. Previously the offices were always filled with applicants trying to secure favorable decisions on their cases.
11. "About six or seven passports are being issued each week. People now go to the Ministry only when summoned to appear."

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